

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Original): A process for preparing a low-odor hydrogel-forming acrylic acid polymer, which comprises the steps of:

- a) preparing a polymeric hydrogel by free-radically polymerizing a monomer composition comprising at least 50% by weight of acrylic acid in an aqueous polymerization medium and converting said hydrogel into a particulate hydrogel or into hydrogel-forming powder; and optionally
- b) treating said particulate hydrogel or said hydrogel-forming powder with a crosslinking substance which, actually or latently, contain at least two functional groups capable of reacting with the carboxyl groups on the addition polymer;

characterized by the acrylic acid used in step a) containing less than 400 ppm (by weight, based on acrylic acid) of volatile saturated carboxylic acids selected from the group consisting of acetic acid and propionic acid.

Claim 2 (Original): A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein step a) is effected using an acrylic acid obtained by a single or multiple stage crystallization of a crude acrylic acid having an acetic and/or propionic acid content in the range from 0.1 to 5% by weight.

Claim 3 (Original): A process as claimed in claim 2, wherein step a) is effected using an acrylic acid obtained by single or multiple stage crystallization of said crude acrylic acid at from 0 to 13°C.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): A process as claimed in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, wherein the acrylic acid used in step a) is in the form of a partially or completely neutralized aqueous acrylic acid solution.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): A process as claimed in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, wherein the crosslinker in step ~~[[c)]]~~ b) is selected from compounds capable of forming ester groups with the carboxyl groups on the addition polymer.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A process as claimed in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, wherein the monomer mixture to be polymerized in step a) comprises, based on its total weight,

- from 50 to 99.99% by weight of acrylic acid as monomer A,
- from 0 to 49.99% by weight of one or more monoethylenically unsaturated monomers B which are copolymerizable with acrylic acid, and
- from 0.01 to 30% by weight of at least one crosslinking compound C.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): ~~The use of an acrylic acid having a propionic acid and acetic acid content of less than 400 ppm~~ A method for preparing a low-odor hydrogel-forming acrylic acid polymer comprising using an acrylic acid having a propionic acid and acetic acid content of less than 400 ppm as a starting material.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): Hydrogel-forming addition polymer obtainable by a process as claimed in ~~any of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): ~~The use of hydrogel-forming addition polymer as~~
~~elaimed in claim 8~~ A method for preparing a hygiene article comprising utilizing the
hydrogel-forming addition polymer as claimed in claim 8.

Claim 10 (Original): Hygiene articles comprising an absorbent core which includes at
least one hydrogel-forming addition polymer as claimed in claim 8.